



Little Voice Sample Lesson Plan

Subject	Book Discussion
Book	The Lighthouse by Amanda Bernardo
Year Group or Grade Level	Grades 3 to 6
Main Topic or Unit	Helping students understand mental health, while exploring and expressing emotions to foster empathy and strategies for overcoming hard times/difficult emotions.
Subtopics or Key Concepts	Mental health awareness, empathy, resilience, hope, kindness, community

Learning Objectives (linked to lesson plan)

- 1) Students understand what mental health means, recognize signs of positive well-being, and begin to identify when support is needed.
- 2) Students understand the metaphor of the lighthouse and reflect on their personal sources of strength.
- 3) Students build emotional literacy and learn healthy ways to manage difficult emotions, learning strategies to self-regulate and find calm.
- 4) Students reflect on resilience and create a personal tool for emotional support.
- 5) Students develop empathy, recognize the impact of bullying, and learn how to respond with kindness and courage.
- 6) Students apply the book's message by practicing empathy, spreading kindness, and reflecting on the emotional impact of their actions.

Lesson Outline (Six day plan)

Day	Focus (linked to learning objectives)	Activity
One	1) Understanding mental health	<p>Create a Support Circle: Students identify and illustrate the people, places, or things that help them feel supported. Discuss what mental health means, signs of well-being, and when someone might need help.</p> <p>Prompts:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What do you think it means to have a healthy mind? • How is mental health similar/different to physical health? • Who are the people in your life who help you feel safe, calm, or happy? • What are some things you do when you're having a hard day? • How can you tell if a friend might need support? • Why is it sometimes hard for people to ask for help? • What are small ways we can be a "light" for someone who might be struggling? • How can we show kindness to each other, even if we don't know what someone is going through?
Two	2) Symbolism in The Lighthouse	<p>Create a classroom Lighthouse: (Prior to class, create a large Lighthouse on a classroom wall to use as the base for this activity) Read <i>The Lighthouse</i> and explore the symbolism of a lighthouse as a source of strength and guidance. Students draw or write about what helps them stay strong during hard times, building off the day one discussion, then add their pieces to the collaborative lighthouse-themed wall display.</p>

<p>Three</p>	<p>3) Feelings are waves</p>	<p>Emotion Walk & Calm-Down Practice: Set up stations around the room or schoolyard that represent different emotions (happy, sad, frustrated, calm, etc.). As students move through each station, they act out or discuss what that feeling might look like, sound like, or feel like. End with a group calming strategy (e.g., deep breathing, stretching, or quiet visualization).</p>
<p>Four</p>	<p>4) Letter to your future self</p>	<p>A Positive Note for a Hard Day: Students write a kind and encouraging letter to their future selves to read when they're feeling down. They include affirmations, reminders of their strengths, and helpful people or strategies they can turn to for support.</p> <p>Affirmation examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● I am kind, I am brave, I am enough. ● I am strong, even when things feel hard. ● I can get through tough days. ● My feelings matter. ● I am never alone—there are people who care about me. ● I have done hard things before, and I can do them again. ● It's okay to ask for help. ● I can take a deep breath and start again.
<p>Five</p>	<p>5) Preventing bullying, being the light</p>	<p>Stand Up, Speak Light: Begin with a class discussion on what bullying can look and feel like, and how it affects mental health. In small groups, students brainstorm kind actions or words they could use if they see someone being excluded or hurt. Each group creates a "Kindness Code" poster to promote standing up for others and being a light in difficult situations.</p>

		<p>Kindness code examples:</p> <p><i>Kindness codes can include examples of beliefs students can hold (B), words students can use (W), and actions students can take (A).</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (B) Everyone deserves to feel safe and included. • (B) We treat others how we want to be treated. • (B) Being kind is being brave. • (W) “Do you want to play with us?” • (W) “Are you okay?” • (W) “I’m here if you need a friend.” • (A) Include someone who’s feeling left out. • (A) Tell a trusted adult if someone is being bullied. • (A) Help a classmate who seems upset or overwhelmed.
Six	6) Small acts of kindness	<p>Kindness in Action: Students are invited to complete three small acts of kindness at school, at home, or in their community. Afterward, they journal about what they did, how the other person responded, and how it made them feel.</p>

Assessment

Teachers can assess these six activities by observing students’ participation, empathy, and emotional expression throughout discussions and reflective tasks. They can look for signs of understanding mental health concepts, recognizing supportive behaviours, and demonstrating compassion toward themselves and others. Informal assessment can be based on how thoughtfully students engage in conversations, collaborate in group activities, and express themselves through journaling, artwork, or writing. Attention to their willingness to share, listen, and reflect helps educators evaluate both social-emotional growth and the personal connection students make with the themes of *The Lighthouse*.

Materials Needed

- Book:** *The Lighthouse* (available at www.amandabernardo.ca)
- Chart paper** or **bulletin board space** (for “Lighthouse Wall” and group posters)
- Drawing paper** and **construction paper**

- Markers, crayons, colored pencils**
- Sticky notes** or **index cards** (for sharing reflections or affirmations)
- Envelopes** (for “A Positive Note for a Hard Day” letter activity)
- Journals** or printed **reflection sheets** (for kindness journaling)
- Poster board** or **large paper** (for group “Kindness Code” posters)
- Scissors, glue sticks, tape**

Notes

The Lighthouse is also available in French. This lesson plan can easily be adapted and used with the French version of the book to support bilingual classrooms or French-language learners.